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INTELLIGENCE NEEDS FOR NATIONAL SECURITY DECISIONMAKING:
AN INFORMAL CONFERENCE ON RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES

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Potential Research Areas

(1) What is the intelligence community? How does it differ from the larger universe of information and research producers? How is it organized institutionally, functionally and organically? What is DIA's place in it? Is DIA an integral element of a cohesive entity, or does it in fact have a distinctly separate identity? An analytic description of the community may be a prerequisite to a real understanding of its interactions.

(2) How do decisionmakers view the intelligence community? How much confidence and reliance do they place in it? To what extent and in what manner do they communicate with it? Are decisionmakers in fact able or willing to articulate their intelligence needs? Is their judgment of the quality of the intelligence product influenced by the nature of the relationship as well as by the nature of the product? Is the arm's length relationship inevitable?

(3) What constitutes the external product of the intelligence community? How can one usefully catalogue the variety of intelligence outputs -- by form (e.g., NIE's, OB's, surveys, field reports, special-purpose briefings), by content (e.g., enemy weapons capabilities, force deployments, warning indicators, estimates of enemy intent, assessments of political developments in friendly countries); by use (e.g., to guide contingency planning, weapons decisions, foreign policy choices, force dispositions; to add to the stock of background information; to provide copy for classified newssheets). What determines the allocation of intelligence resources to these various products? Since, to the user, the intelligence product appears to be a free good, what reason does he have to limit his demands? In order to begin to assess the utility of various elements of the intelligence product to decisionmakers, an extensive cataloguing effort would be essential.

(4) How well does the intelligence product meet the needs of the policy-making community? Does the intelligence community have a clear notion of these needs? Do policymakers? For example, both seem to grope for predictions about the unpredictable, when instead both would be better served by making uncertainty explicit and, where possible, by assessing the range, probabilities, and implications of alternative outcomes. To what extent is the nature of the product determined by the momentum of the intelligence producing mechanism rather than by the needs of the consumer?

(5) How are collection requirements generated? Are the changing intelligence needs of policymakers translated into clear signals to the collection effort or are they attenuated in the process of production and coordination? Do collection systems generate their own requirements? Do anachronistic contingency planning habits burden the system with unrealistic requirements? Are collection requirements systematically reviewed to weed out archaic and redundant "user needs"?

(6) What promising analytic techniques and ongoing research approaches might be helpful in the study of the above questions or otherwise of interest?